



The Pre-Adamite Age

An ancient tradition ascribed the establishment of Moon worship to Adam, the first man. The medieval Arab scholar Abubacer wrote:

They [the Sabaeans] say that Adam was born from male and female, just like the rest of mankind, but they honored him greatly, and said that he had come from the Moon, that he was the prophet and apostle of the Moon, and that he had exhorted the nations that they should serve the Moon. . . . They also related about Adam that when he had left the Moon and proceeded from the area of India towards Babylonia, that he brought many wonders with him.⁽¹⁾

The Adamites, the ante-diluvial men, were most probably not the first human beings on the planet. Even admitting that by “expulsion from the Garden of Eden” is allegorized a catastrophe which quite destroyed mankind prior to the Deluge, it is impossible to declare that it was the first catastrophe. It depends on the memory of the peoples which catastrophe they consider as the act of creation. Human beings, rising from some catastrophe, bereft of memory of what had happened, regarded themselves as created from the dust of the earth. All knowledge about the ancestors, who they were and in what interstellar space they lived, was wiped away from the memory of the few survivors. The talmudic-rabbinical tradition believes that before Adam was created, the world was more than once inhabited and more than once destroyed.

It was at the end of the first age, symbolized by the expulsion of man from the blessed Garden of Eden, that the moon lost its brightness.⁽²⁾ It was not just a single human pair—the tradition ascribes to Adam the invention of seventy languages.

Hebrew mythology assigns to the period preceding Adam’s expulsion different geophysical and biological conditions. The sun shone permanently on the Earth, and the Garden of Eden, placed in the East, was, it must be conceived, under perpetual rays of the Dawn. The earth was not watered by rain, but mist ascending from the ground condensed as dew upon the leaves. “The plants looked only to the earth for nourishment.” Man was of exceedingly great stature: “The dimensions of man’s body were gigantic.” His appearance was unlike that of later men: “His body was overlaid with a horny skin.” But a day came and the celestial illumination ceased: “The sun . . . had grown dark the instant Adam became guilty of disobedience.”⁽³⁾ The flames of the ever-turning sword terrified Adam (Genesis 3:24). In another legend it is told that the celestial light shone a little in the darkness. And then “the celestial light ceased, to the consternation of Adam.” The illumination of the first period never returned. The sky that man was used to see never appeared before him again: “The firmament is not the same as the heavens of the first day.” The “day” of Genesis, as I have already noted, is said to be equal to a thousand years.

It was after the fall of man, according to Hebrew tradition, that the sun set for the first time: “The first time Adam witnessed the sinking of the sun, he was seized with anxious fears. All the night he spent in tears. When day began to dawn, he understood that what he had deplored was but the course of nature.” It was also then that the seasons began. This is told in the following story: “Adam noticed that the days were growing shorter and

feared lest the world be darkened . . . but after the winter solstice he saw that the days grew longer again.”

The earth also underwent changes: “Independent before, she was hereafter to wait to be watered by the rain from above.” ⁽⁴⁾ The variety of species diminished. Man, according to Hebrew legends, decreased in size; there was a “vast difference between his later and his former state—between his supernatural size then, and his shrunken size now.” ⁽⁵⁾ He also lost his horny skin. The whole of nature altered its ways.

References

1. Quoted in Athanasius Kircher, *Turris Babel sive Archonotologia* (Amsterdam, 1679), p. 134.
2. “The very angels and the celestial beings were grieved by the transgression of Adam. The moon alone laughed wherefore God . . . obscured her light.” Ginzberg, *Legends*, I, 80.
3. Ginzberg, *Legends*, I, 79.
4. Ginzberg, *Legends*, I, 79.
5. Ginzberg, *Legends* I, 76.

